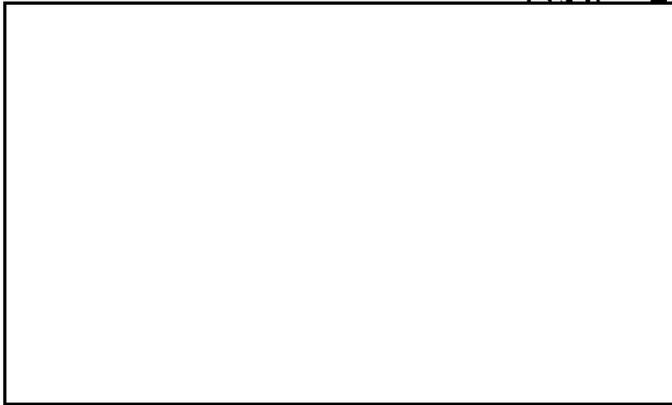


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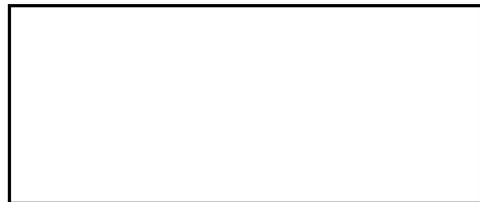
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Intelligence Memorandum

*The President's China Trip:
Governmental Reactions*

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State Department review completed



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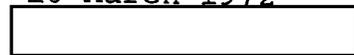
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The President's China Trip: Governmental Reactions

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
10 March 1972

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The President's China Trip: Governmental Reactions

Summary

President Nixon's trip to China naturally has generated the most intense interest among countries closest to China.

The strongest negative reactions have come from Nationalist China, North Vietnam, and the Soviet Union, countries that see their national interests involved in any improvement in Sino-US relations. Despite US reassurances following the trip, Chinese Nationalist leaders in Taipei remain deeply suspicious that the US commitment to them has been seriously weakened. Peking's reassurances failed to calm Hanoi's fears that China's support on the Indochina issue is endangered and that a lessening of Sino-US tension will be detrimental to the North Vietnamese position throughout Southeast Asia. The Soviet Union, which played on these Hanoi fears during the visit, sees the evolving new relationship between China and the US as complicating Moscow's efforts to extend Soviet influence in Asia.

India has also taken a negative position. The Indians see several passages in the Shanghai communiqué as being directed against both them and the Indo-Soviet friendship treaty, and Prime Minister Gandhi has felt constrained to emphasize India will not be bound by the decisions of "any new power group" in Asia.

Note: This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence.

South Vietnamese officials, who outwardly have adopted a relaxed and even positive attitude, are concerned that the trip might endanger Saigon's interests by facilitating an eventual settlement in Indochina arranged by the great powers. Laos and Cambodia have reacted favorably to the trip. Laotian Prince Souvanna has said that the visit will work to his country's benefit by reducing tension in Southeast Asia. The Lon Nol government sees in the communiqué indications that Peking's support for Sihanouk's government-in-exile is waning as well as an opportunity to exploit the communiqué's affirmation of the right of all countries to resist foreign aggression.

For Japan, the trip has increased domestic political pressure on the Sato government to normalize relations with Peking, and this has resulted in a slight liberalization of Tokyo's Taiwan policy, the major obstacle to establishing Sino-Japanese diplomatic ties. While publicly welcoming the trip, Japanese leaders remain apprehensive about its possible consequences for power relationships in the Far East.

The reactions of Japan's neighbors, North and South Korea, have been mixed. Pyongyang has characterized the trip as a symbolic defeat for the US and a victory for its close ally China. Although Seoul professes to be reassured, the South Koreans cannot help but be apprehensive about the implications for them of what they choose to interpret as a US abandonment of Taipei.

In Western Europe, the impact has been less pronounced. London appears ready to establish ambassadorial relations almost entirely on Peking's terms--a move that probably has some relationship to the President's visit. In West Germany, China's largest trading partner in Europe, recognition of China has become an issue in domestic politics since the visit, with the opposition party weighing in against the Brandt government for not pursuing this end more actively.

Official reaction has been sparse in areas of the world remote from the problems of Asia. Arab officials have made a connection between the China trip and President Nixon's forthcoming visit to Moscow where the Middle East will, they believe, be a major topic. The more conservative states of Africa have deplored the US "sell-out" of Taiwan, but left-leaning states like Tanzania have applauded the trip. Cuba has denounced US duplicity in Asia; Chilean President Allende praised the trip. In general Latin American reaction has been favorable, but many Latin American leaders are more apprehensive about US intentions toward Cuba.

Nationalist China

1. The overall impact on Nationalist China, the country most immediately affected by the President's visit, has been to increase Taipei's sense of isolation and its fear that international support continues the decline highlighted last fall with Peking's admission to the UN. Although the government has made an effort to avoid anti-US polemics and to project an image of flexibility and calmness, officials reportedly reacted to the final communiqué with "shock." On 28 February, the foreign ministry stated its official position that "any agreement, public or secret, involving the rights and interests of the government and people of the Republic of China' is null and void.

2. Despite efforts by Assistant Secretary Green to reassure Taipei, Nationalist leaders remain fearful and suspicious of US intentions. They are especially disturbed by the communiqué's failure to record reassurances for Taipei similar to those given to Seoul and Saigon, and the leaders wonder whether they are going to be subjected to growing pressure from the US to negotiate a settlement with their historic enemies. They left Assistant Secretary Green with the clear impression that they feel the communiqué compromises the spirit if not the letter of the US defense commitment to Taipei. Foreign Minister Chou said flatly that US acceptance of both the five principles and recognition that Taiwan is a part of China implied that Washington would not defend Taiwan if Peking sought its "liberation." Nationalist leaders dismissed as "naive" the US assessment that Peking is willing to accept the status quo on Taiwan for the indefinite future. They were not convinced by arguments that the President's visit has reduced the chances that Peking might try to take the island by force.

3. Vice Premier Chiang Ching-kuo was especially concerned about the criteria that the US would use for reducing its forces on Taiwan and sought assurances that the US policy of extending aid for "self

help" would be applied to Taipei. He stressed his view that the President's trip had caused "uncertainty and anxiety" throughout Asia and that the US would have to take countermeasures to stabilize the situation. Chiang also told US spokesmen that he was taking seriously Washington's repeated advice to watch for "deeds, not words."

4. The effect of the trip on Taipei shows most clearly in announcements on 5 and 7 March that it is prepared to open economic and political contacts with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe-- until now unthinkable for the doctrinaire anti-Communist Nationalists.

Southeast Asia and the Pacific

North Vietnam

5. North Vietnam has yet to comment officially on the US-China summit, but its propaganda media have been filled with elliptical references to the parts of the final communiqué that are causing particular heartburn in Hanoi.

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6. Despite these efforts, Hanoi's unhappiness persists. Much of the concern, as reflected in the North Vietnamese press before and since, seems to focus on the treatment both the US and China give in the communiqué to the question of troop withdrawals.

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In a rare direct reference to the communiqué, a long "Commentator" article in the 3 March edition of the party newspaper complained that President Nixon in a recent

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"document" had "again insolently demanded that the Indochinese people bargain for the complete withdrawal of US forces" and had "ballyhooed the Indochinese peoples' desire for self determination." The editorial obviously registered Hanoi's concern over the US statement in the communiqué that "in the absence of a negotiated settlement" the US would withdraw its forces from Indochina only at a pace consistent with "the aim of self-determination for the countries of Indochina." This statement was condemned as "hypocritical" in the joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of Sihanouk's visit to North Vietnam on 5 March.

7. Soon after the President's departure from China, North Vietnamese "sources" [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

the regime's determination not to be forced to side irrevocably with one of its major allies-- i.e., the Soviets--against the other. At the same time, the North Vietnamese have taken advantage of publicity surrounding Sihanouk's visit to Hanoi during the US-China summit to re-emphasize the "solidarity of the Indochinese people" and their determination to struggle on against "US aggression".

South Vietnam

8. By contrast, the South Vietnamese have been generally relaxed. Saigon seems to have enjoyed seeing one of the enemy's great allies cordially hosting an American president. Nevertheless, articles planted in the press by the government reflect an underlying concern that South Vietnamese interests might be sacrificed in a settlement arranged by the great powers. Top South Vietnamese leaders have made a special effort to deflate any popular expectation that the US-China summit would lead to an early peace in Indochina. Nevertheless, Saigon, possibly in part because of the President's trip, is no longer categorically ruling out neutralization of Southeast Asia as the basis for an eventual war settlement, a plan which Saigon would have found unthinkable not long ago. Thieu first broached

his acceptance "in principle" of neutralization in late January, and he publicly stated his support for such a plan in an interview in The New York Times while President Nixon was still in China.

Cambodia

9. The Lon Nol government has said it is "deeply elated" with the tone and content of the Shanghai communiqué. In a recent official announcement, the government noted that the communiqué's principles concerning the Cambodia problem do not differ from the 1954 Geneva agreements, from the Bandung principles of peaceful co-existence, or from those mentioned in the United Nations Charter. The statement made clear the government's particular interest in the communiqué's affirmation of the right of all countries to resist foreign aggression and subversion, and Phnom Penh's encouragement by Peking's failure to mention Sihanouk's government-in-exile and front organization. Some Cambodian leaders have chosen to view this omission as a sign that Chinese support for Sihanouk is wavering. The statement also welcomed President Nixon's forthcoming visit to the Soviet Union.

Laos

10. Laotian Prime Minister Souvanna has stated privately that the President's trip to China would benefit Laos by helping to reduce tension throughout Southeast Asia. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] he does not think the Chinese will suddenly stop supporting the North Vietnamese but that Peking may exert some influence on Hanoi to stop the war. [REDACTED] he is depending upon the President's talks with the Soviets in May to bring about an improved "atmosphere" in Indochina, particularly in Laos and Cambodia.

Thailand

11. The thrust of official Thai public commentary is that any accommodation between the US and China would not affect Thailand's posture.

General Praphat said that Bangkok would give primary consideration to its own interests and security, remembering that the Chinese continue to support Communist insurgents in Thailand. He emphasized that any change in US relations with Taiwan would not affect Bangkok's relations with Taipei. Thai recognition of a need for some flexibility was reflected, however, in reports that Bangkok would give favorable consideration to Peking's invitation to a Thai sports team.

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Indonesia

14. President Suharto believes that, despite the visit, the normalization of US-Chinese relations will develop slowly. Both Suharto and Foreign Minister Malik have stated that the President's trip will have little or no effect on Indonesia's still-suspended relations with China. Suharto remarked privately that Indonesia's chief concern was whether the US would take unnecessary risks or sacrifice its friends for the sake of good relations with China, adding that he was personally convinced the US would not do so.

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Singapore

16. Singapore officials have shown strong interest in the President's visit but have said very little about it publicly. The only official comment noted so far has been by a high official in the foreign ministry who warned against undue optimism and declared that Singapore would stick to its cautious non-aligned policy. The official asserted that neither the US nor China had Singapore's interests in mind, that large powers try to force small powers to take sides, and that Singapore must await developments and see how it fits into the new situation.

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Philippines

19. The China visit has caused a further erosion of Philippine confidence in US determination to remain in the Western Pacific. President Marcos has expressed concern over the practical meaning of the communiqué's reference to a gradual withdrawal from Taiwan. Although assured by Assistant Secretary Green that this was not a prelude to a general US withdrawal from the Pacific, Marcos is clearly still worried. His reaction was reflected in his appointment of a cabinet committee to examine an "eventual disengagement" by Manila from Taipei and the possible opening of diplomatic relations with Peking. While Foreign Secretary Romulo publicly took a hopeful view of the communiqué, his private reaction was emotional. He complained to the US ambassador that the US had given Peking much and received little and had sold Taiwan down the river.

Burma

20. Rangoon, with its strict non-aligned stance, has not commented publicly on the China visit, but the trip generated keen interest among top-level officials. The Burmese feel that closer US-China ties would be generally beneficial. In particular, they hope that the Chinese reiteration of non-involvement in the internal affairs of others will result in reduced Chinese support of Burmese Communist insurgency.

Australia and New Zealand

21. Prime Minister McMahon, in a prepared statement issued on 28 February, welcomed the visit as a "gain for all of us" and in line with Australia's own objective of progressive normalization of relations with China. He saw the US-China exchange as a good beginning toward exploring a wide range of issues, and noted that neither side "is about to abandon old friends."

22. New Zealand officials have commented positively, although in generalities. Minister

of Foreign Affairs Holyoake has spoken of the visit as a "significant step toward the reduction of tensions in Asia."

North Asia

Japan

23. Japanese reaction combined a sense of relief at what they saw as relatively limited results with a gnawing uneasiness about the trip's broader implications for Japan's interest in general and that of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party in particular. Government officials publicly welcomed the China visit, but their private remarks, initially at least, betrayed apprehension that the trip might alter Far East relationships in some as yet unknown, but probably adverse, manner. While they now have been somewhat reassured, a deep-seated uneasiness persists, and it may prove difficult to dispel. The sense that Japan has been left behind on the China issue clearly poses serious domestic political problems for the Sato government.

24. The portion of the communiqué that most bothered many Japanese leaders was that dealing with the withdrawal of US armed forces from Taiwan. They fear that the US--unilaterally and ahead of Japan--has gone a considerable way toward resolving the Taiwan issue. It is this feeling of being left behind, along with the absence of what they consider adequate prior consultations, that rankles most. These Japanese also fear that US actions may well have complicated Tokyo's own efforts to move toward normal relations with Peking.

25. The Sato administration is now under strong pressure to show tangible progress toward normalization. Both Sato and his most likely successor, Foreign Minister Fukuda, have faced bitter wrangling over China policy, both in the Diet and the ruling party's councils. Sato's contradictory remarks on the status of Taiwan

have forced the party to hammer out a "unified view" on the China question in which the government acknowledges that Peking's position that Taiwan is a territory of the Peoples Republic is "fully understandable" and that the government will attempt to normalize relations with Peking on the basis of this understanding.

26. A further blow could come soon when the British announce establishment of ambassadorial-level relations with the mainland on terms that fully accept Peking's position on the Taiwan question. This could mean further trouble in the Diet for Sato. The opposition parties, which have just concluded an 18-day boycott of the Diet, might well walk out again, contrasting the British stand with the ruling party's ambiguously worded "unified view." Another boycott, on the heels of the earlier crisis, could seriously erode Sato's weakened government.

South Korea

27. The South Korean leadership, which initially viewed the President's trip with considerable apprehension, has to a large degree been reassured by the outcome. It now regards the trip as a favorable development that may contribute generally to easing tensions in Asia. The Koreans were greatly relieved that in the communiqué both sides merely restated their respective positions on the Korean question, and Seoul interprets this as a reaffirmation of continued US support. In subsequent meetings with Assistant Secretary Green, President Pak and his chief lieutenants, after considerable probing, appeared satisfied that the communiqué contained the sum and substance of the discussion on the Korean problem.

28. Even so, the South Koreans remain uneasy about the long-term meaning of the Sino-US talks. The US statement on Taiwan in the communiqué has bothered government leaders, for they

see implications for Korea in what they choose to interpret as US abandonment of the Chinese Nationalists. Moreover, while Seoul sees the visit as lessening hostilities in the area, it does not necessarily believe that the trip will improve the situation on the Korean peninsula.

North Korea

29. North Korea has underscored its current close relationship with Peking by strongly endorsing the Sino-US talks. Pyongyang appears to be particularly gratified by the strong Chinese support in the communiqué of the North Korean proposal for peaceful unification with the South--a subject for which North Korea has been actively seeking international support. Pyongyang's characterization of the trip as a reflection of China's prestige and power and as a symbol of US defeat was in line with North Korea's standard position since it endorsed the talks last August. The North Koreans have used the language of the communiqué to support their own efforts at pressuring the South Koreans into a political dialogue. Still, Pyongyang's statements of support were not without qualification and at several points suggested the North Koreans' intention to be independent in Asian Communist affairs.

South Asia

India

30. Indian leaders are apprehensive about the implications of a Chinese-American detente. Government spokesmen have suggested that the communiqué conceals more than it reveals. Prime Minister Gandhi remains concerned that friendship between China and the US will bring about a new balance of forces that will circumscribe India's freedom of action. She has underscored her dislike of the "outmoded" concept of a balance of power and has emphasized that India will not be bound by the decision of any "new power group." Her suspicions that no good could come of a Sino-American detente were highlighted in her private

comment that Indo-US relations would be slow to improve if Sino-US relations warmed up.

31. Despite the Indians' stated disdain of balance-of-power politics, they appear sensitive to any attack on their own relationship with the USSR. An Indian foreign ministry spokesman professed to see several passages in the communiqué as directed at the Soviet Union and the Indo-Soviet friendship treaty.

32. Indian leaders reacted adversely to those portions of the communiqué that touched on South Asian affairs. Speaking in Calcutta on 2 March, Mrs. Gandhi described the references to the Kashmir cease-fire line as amounting to "blatant interference" in India's internal affairs. Indian spokesmen emphasized that the problems of Kashmir would be handled as part of an overall peace settlement with Pakistan and that Sino-US concern was "irrelevant."

33. New Delhi continues to see Pakistan as a threat to Indian security, and Mrs. Gandhi believes Chinese and US support of Pakistan endanger Indian interests. She has repeatedly expressed her displeasure with "certain powers" that continue to supply arms to Pakistan and has warned that peace will not be strengthened if a Chinese-American rapprochement is directed against "any other country." More pointedly, she has warned the US against endangering Asian peace by befriending China at the cost of arousing India's enmity.

Pakistan

34. In sharp contrast, Pakistani spokesmen enthusiastically welcomed the Sino-American communiqué as holding out "hopeful possibilities" for resolving many world problems, including those of South Asia. The Pakistanis generally have viewed the communiqué as vindicating Islamabad's stand against India. The president of Azad Kashmir (the

Pakistani part) has expressed his deep gratitude, particularly to China, for reiterating its support for the right of self-determination for Kashmir. While Indian spokesmen claim that President Nixon lost more than he gained in Peking, Pakistani official commentaries do not see any US concessions, contending that the US has simply faced up to Asian realities.

Bangladesh

35. The government has adhered closely to the Indian line, with Prime Minister Mujibur Rahman calling on the big powers to leave the nations of Asia to solve their problems alone. Mujib publicly asked that President Nixon refrain from attempting to solve the problems of Asia from Peking and warned that both the US and China would fail if they attempted to act against Bangladesh.

The USSR and Eastern Europe

The USSR

36. The Soviet Union has reacted to the Nixon visit cautiously and has not yet issued an authoritative comment on the trip, either publicly or privately. One prominent Soviet journalist has said, however, that such a comment is on the drafting board. Meanwhile, Moscow projects a wait-and-see attitude, which, nevertheless, reflects a strong suspicion the US-Chinese dialogue contains much that has not been publicized and that the USSR's interests have been damaged. At the same time, Moscow has tried not to arouse undue domestic alarm over the visit.

37. Soviet treatment of the communiqué and statements by the President and Dr. Kissinger has been accurate in portraying the US and Chinese angles but has avoided passages aimed at reassuring the USSR, thus signaling Moscow's reservations on this score. A TASS report on 28 February accurately outlined areas of disagreement between the two sides but referred to US press reports that US and Chinese positions "have become close" regarding Taiwan.

38. Although Moscow has noted that the US and China agreed that no country should dominate the Asia-Pacific region, it failed to cite the communiqué's passages ruling out collusion or agreements aimed at other states. Similarly, it has not cited the assurances of the President and Dr. Kissinger that no secret agreements were entered into, although a Pravda article on 5 March took indirect critical note of these statements.

39. Moscow's concern that the communiqué was aimed in part at the USSR was indicated by the Soviet political counselor in Paris on 28 February. In a conversation with a US diplomat, he zeroed in on the passage regarding hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region and stated that only two countries could be meant--Japan and the Soviet Union. He argued that the language in the communiqué referring to collusion and spheres of interest revealed US and Chinese suspicions of the Soviet Union. Some Soviet officials in Moscow have speculated to US Embassy officials that secret agreements exist. Indeed, Soviet commentary since the trip has tended to be somewhat more critical of the US than before the trip. Moscow commentary probably will continue to emphasize that the USSR was not intimidated by the trip and that Washington should not expect concessions as a result, but thus far Soviet diatribes have not come close to the vituperation directed at Peking.

40. Although deeply apprehensive over the impact on its world position, Moscow has lost little time in capitalizing on opportunities the visit offers to score points when it can. The Soviets, for example, have stressed that the USSR and Japan have a common interest in improving relations in order to counter the Sino-American rapprochement. Moscow has given heavy play to the theme that Peking has "sold out Hanoi" and has cited alleged Chinese silence about US air attacks during the visit as proof. The Pravda commentary on 5 March stressed that Washington and Peking "struck a bargain" behind the backs of the Vietnamese people by linking a US pullout from Taiwan with Chinese pressure on Hanoi to accept American peace terms. [REDACTED]

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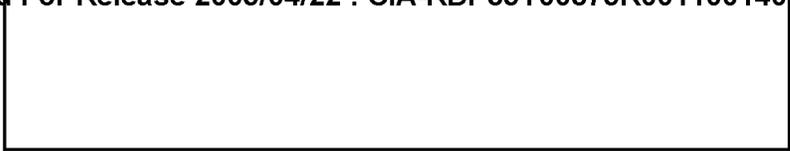
Eastern Europe

41. East European regimes closely allied with Moscow have hewed editorially to the alleged "anti-Soviet" nature of the trip. Several regime-controlled dailies have hinted darkly that there was something far more insidious to the Sino-American exchange than met the eye. Such comments were aimed more at Peking than Washington.

42. The maverick Romanians, predictably, took a positive stand on the trip by publishing a lengthy editorial in Scinteia, the party daily, on 1 March. It was signed by "V. Iliescu," a nom de plume used by the party to give a particular piece enhanced authority. The editorial applauded the talks. It said they marked a US recognition of "realities" and a vindication of the Romanian line that all international problems should be solved by direct contacts between states regardless of their social systems. Calling the trip "one of the historic events of international life," the article lauded the progress toward "normalization" of relations between Washington and Peking.

43. Yugoslavia's reaction also was very favorable. Heavy media coverage voiced pleasure at the international implications of the visit and gently chided the Soviets for their hostility to it. The foreign ministry had praise for the trip, emphasizing that China and the US recognize existing differences but agreed to respect the principles of sovereignty and nonaggression, equality, peaceful co-existence, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, points the Yugoslavs like to make themselves. The ministry also was pleased with the communiqué's statements that opposed negotiating at the expense of others and dividing the world into spheres of interest.

44. Albania, friend of Peking but implacable enemy of the US and USSR, has made absolutely no comment, limiting its coverage to brief factual reports during the trip.


Western EuropeWest Germany

45. The visit whetted West German interest in normalizing relations with Peking. The Brandt government and the opposition parties agree on the desirability of establishing relations but differ on timing. The government intends to seek preliminary discussions in a third country capital, possibly Paris, but only after ratification of Bonn's treaties with the Soviet Union and Poland sometime this summer. The opposition, which opposes ratification of the treaties, has called for negotiations without delay.

United Kingdom

46. While the President was still in China, London and Peking agreed privately that they would announce the establishment of ambassadorial relations sometime shortly after his departure, on terms that met all of Peking's requirements with respect to Taiwan. Thus, while the Heath government has made no official statements on the visit, its private actions suggest that it believes pro-China momentum will be accelerated by the trip and that it does not want to be left behind in the rush toward Peking.

France

47. The first Western country to establish full diplomatic relations with Peking, France issued an official statement noting that the US had recognized the wisdom of Paris' early moves. Foreign Minister Schumann, according to the statement, spoke for his government when he said on 1 March the trip "concerns the normalization of relations between the United States and China, and that is a very important development for the world and especially for Asia and the countries bordering on the Pacific." Quai officials hold the view that neither side made startling concessions, but that on balance the Chinese "gave" more than the US, citing a "lukewarm" Chinese statement on Indochina and what they take to be Peking's restraint on Taiwan.

Other

48. The reaction of diplomats and officials in Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and Belgium was favorable but platitudinous. There has been no official reaction from Spain, Italy, or Austria.

Middle East and Africa

49. Although they rarely said so, many Arabs connected the President's trip to Peking with his forthcoming visit to Moscow, during which most area observers expect Middle East problems to be a major topic. Arab spokesmen had already voiced concern that the Soviets and the US might compromise the interests of their respective clients in the area. On the trip itself, the reported reaction of Arab League officials in Cairo may have been fairly typical--that the President's visit to America's arch-enemy "demonstrates that the only thing the US understands is power."

50. For the most part, the Israelis seem to view the visit as a significant world event, but of little direct concern to them.

51. The Turkish Government has applauded the trip, which officials see as a possible opening for detente in the Far East and as confirming the wisdom of their own policy of moving to establish diplomatic relations with Peking.

52. Official African reaction has been sparse but generally favorable. What official public and private comment there was reflected the Africans' interest in how developments in Sino-American relations would affect them. Left-leaning governments, such as Tanzania, have wondered whether the visit will improve Washington's attitude toward efforts to end white minority rule in southern Africa. More conservative governments, such as the Ivory Coast, have evinced some concern that the US may prove itself an unsteady ally by "abandoning" the Chinese Nationalists.

Latin America

53. Latin Americans generally have been slow and cautious in reacting to the trip and the communiqué. There have been few official reactions thus far. Colombian President Pastrana, in response to a question, said that "isolated acts are not as important as regional or group policies." He probably was reflecting Latin apprehensions over the steadiness of US policy toward Cuba and concern that Colombia would be caught out of step. In an earlier statement, Pastrana had reiterated his desire that Colombia open commercial ties with Peking. The Venezuelan foreign minister called the visit "very constructive" and predicted it "will contribute to the rapprochement and consolidation of world peace." The Peruvian foreign minister stated "the dialogue between the US and the Chinese will ease world tensions." A spokesman at the foreign ministry called for a similar gesture toward Cuba. The Brazilian foreign minister's assertion, when questioned by the press, that "it would be premature to comment" was typical of the restraint of many other Latin American political leaders.

54. Chilean President Allende commented favorably in a press conference on 21 February, saying "the results obtained could determine the future of world peace." In a major speech a week later, Allende used the idea of US-Chinese rapprochement to criticize his opponents on the radical left and to argue for gradualist, non-violent methods.

55. Havana initially treated the visit factually in both domestic and international media, using foreign news agencies for coverage on the President's departure and arrival in Peking. On 21 February, the Nixon-Mao visit was covered, and the tone of Cuban comments began to sour. On 22 February, Granma, the official Cuban Communist Party daily, ran headlines "Cordial Nixon-Mao Interview," and "Paper Tiger Delivers Sweet Speech in Peking." During the remainder of the visit, Cuban media gave equal coverage and prominence to stories about the trip and to accounts of US "aggression" in Vietnam. Throughout the visit Havana refrained from any direct criticisms of Peking.